

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

The Patent Office rejected claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Hanan, U.S. Patent 6,898,730 (“Hanan”).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Applicant respectfully submits that a *prima facie* case of anticipation is not proper as Hanan is not valid as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Please refer to the submission of a Rule 1.131 affidavit submitted by the inventors. This declaration is made after final rejection but immediately following the Examiner’s citing of a reference, U.S. Patent No. 6,898,730.

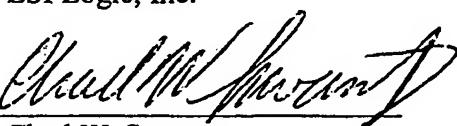
The inventors conceived the invention at a date prior to November 30, 2001 coupled with diligence in completing the invention until filing of the patent application on December 19, 2001. The affidavit includes an Invention Disclosure, (Exhibit A), which the inventors signed. Since Hanan is not a prior art reference, a *prima facie* case of anticipation has not been established and all claims should be allowed.

CONCLUSION

In light of the forgoing, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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